

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0396

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, AG
SUBJECT: ALGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: LIST OF CANDIDATES
PUBLISHED

1. ON FEB 11, GOA PUBLISHED NAMES OF THE 780 CANDIDATES WHO
WILL SEEK ELECTION FEB 25 TO 260-SEAT NATIONAL POPULAR
ASSEMBLY. MEDIA HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEGUN PUBLISHING
CANDIDATES' PHOTOGRAPHS, AGES AND ONE OR TWO WORD JOB
DESCRIPTION. THIS, EVIDENTLY, IS ALL VOTERS WILL BE GIVEN
FORMALLY AS BASIS FOR DECIDING HOW TO VOTE.

2. LIST CONTAINS A SMALL MINORITY OF NOTABLES, INCLUDING
SIX CABINET MINISTERS, THREE AMBASSADORS, AND SEVERAL HIGH
GOVERNMENT AND MASS ORGANIZATION FIGURES. MINISTERS ARE
BITAT OF TRANSPORT, YAKER OF COMMERCE, TEMAN OF FINANCE,
FADHEL OF YOUTH AND SPORTS, GUENNEZ OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
AND ZAIBEK OF PUBLIC WORKDS. FOR MOST PART, HOWEVER,
CANDIDATES ARE "OF THE BASE." I.E. AGRARIAN REVOLUTION
OPERATIVES AND FARMERS, SEEMINGLY MINOR FUNCITONARIES,
WORKERS, TEACHERS, AND FLN OPERATIVES. 27 ARE WOMEN.

3. QUESTION OF WHETHR DEPUTIES WILL BE FORCED TO RSIGN
THEIR PRESENT JOBS NOT YET ANSWERED DEFINITELY, BUT
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INDICATIONS ARE THAT THEY WILL. HIGHER EDUCATION
MINISTER BENYAHIA TOLD FRENCH THAT, "IN HIS PERSONAL
OPINION", CABINET MINISTERS WOULD RESIGN IF ELECTED.
BENYAHIA ADDED THAT CABINET RESHUFFLE WOULD NOT BE
LIMITED OT THOSE SEEKING ELECTION, A REMARK WHICH INDICATES
THAT MINISTERIAL CHANGES ARE ON REGIME'S MIND.

4. ON MORE MUNDANE LEVEL, MOST SOURCES NOW BELIEVE THAT DEPUTIES WILL RECEIVE PROPER SALARY AND OTHER PERKS, NOTABLY OFFICIAL AUTOMOBILE. IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THOSE ELECTED WOULD CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SALARIES FROM THEIR REGULAR JOBS PLUS ALLOWANCES FOR EXPENSES ARISING FROM THEIR LEGISLATIVE DUTIES. NO ONE SEEMS ENTIRELY SURE ON THIS POINT, HOWEVER.

5. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE STRESSED THAT, BECAUSE OF HIGH INTEREST AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL, TASK OF DRAWING UP FINAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. WE UNDERSTAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT AT ONE POINT IN PROCESS NUMBER OF CANDIDATES FOR 78 SEATS IN ALGIERS WILAYA (PROVINCE) WAS 1400.

6. COMMENT: AFTER PERIOD OF CONFUSION, REGIME SEEMS TO HAVE ELECTORAL PROCESS BACK ON RAILS. CANDIDATE LIST PUBLISHED EXACTLY TWO WEEKS BEFORE ELECTION DAY AS HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PLANNED.

7. IF ELECTED, MINISTERS WILL GIVE ASSEMBLY GREATER WEIGHT AND MAY ALSO PLAY WATCHDOG ROLE OVER THEIR NEW AND LESS WELL KNOWN COLLEAGUES. LATEST SPECULATION IS THAT BITAT, THE ONLY ONE OF THE NINE HISTORIC LEADERS OF ALGERIAN REVOLUTION STILL PLAYING ACTIVE ROLE IN REGIME, WILL BE PRESIDENT OF ASSEMBLY AND THAT YAKER AND TEMAN WILL HEAD FOREIGN RELATIONS AND FINANCE COMMITTEES. FRENCH CONFIRM OUR IMPRESSION THAT TEMAN UNWELL, AND HIS LIKELY DEPARTURE
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FROM CABINET MAY THUS BE FOR REASONS OF HEALTH.

8. AT THIS WRITING, DECISION TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE STEMMED FROM CONFLICT BETWEEN ALGIERS AND COUNTRYSIDE. ONE OFFICIAL SAID FEB 12 THAT POSTPONEMENT AND INCREASE IN NUMBER OF CANDIDATES HAD RECONCILED INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES. "DON'T SAY THAT ALGERIANS DON'T KNOW HOW TO COMPROMISE," HE SMILINGLY CONCLUDED. LYNE

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Disposition History: n/a
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